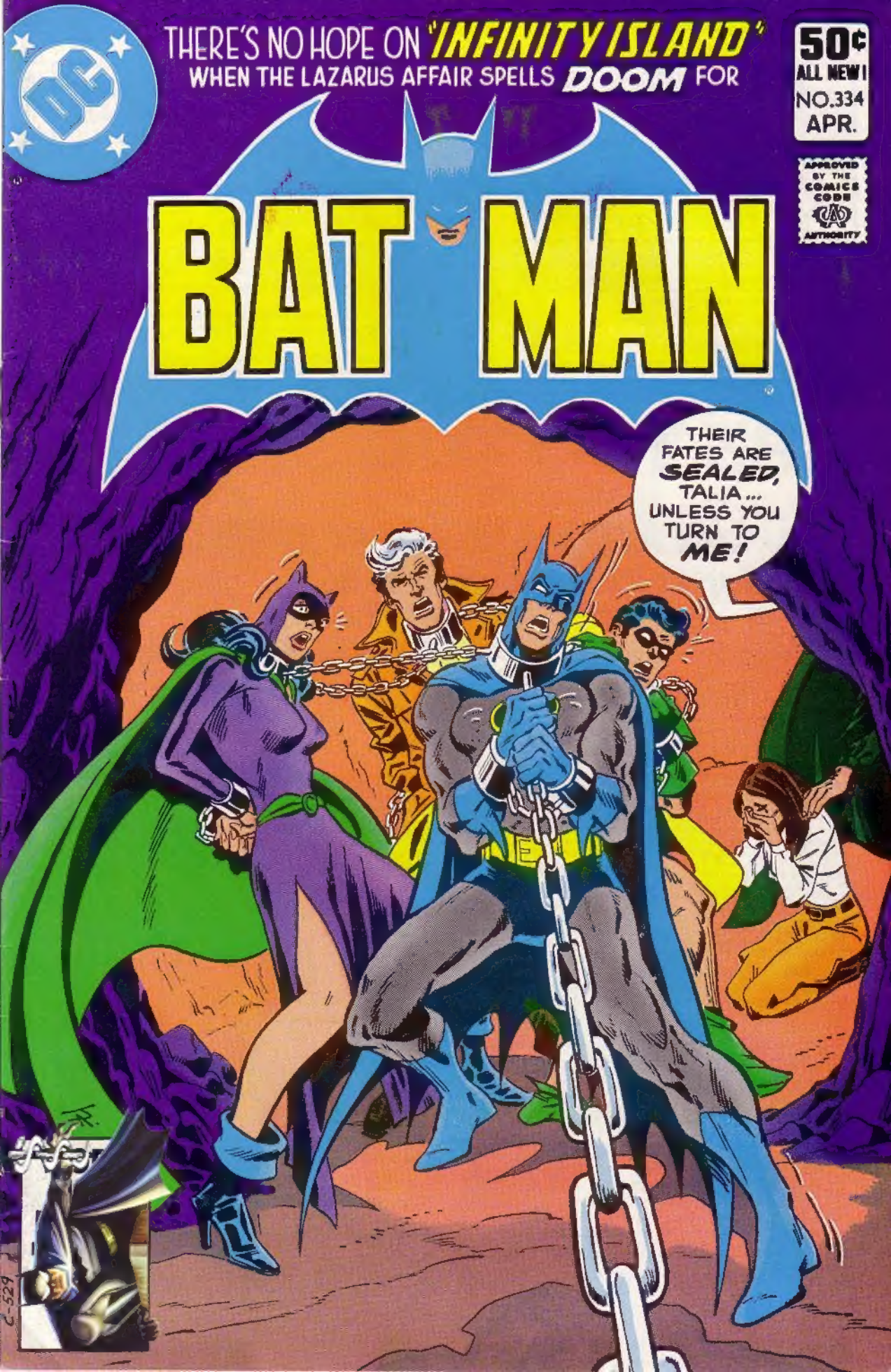
THERE'S NO HOPE ON "INFINITY ISLAND"
WHEN THE LAZARUS AFFAIR SPELLS DOOM FOR
50¢
ALL NEW!
NO.334
APR.
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BAT MAN
THEIR FATES ARE SEALED, TALIA... UNLESS YOU TURN TO ME!

From the diary of Al Jalmïn
17th Century Historian:
"ONCE HE CAME WITH HIS MONSTERS AND MADMEN, OUR BRAVE PEOPLE NEVER AGAIN SAW THE LIGHT OF HOPE. WE WERE HERDED LIKE SHEEP INTO THE MINES, FORCED TO CONSTANTLY DIG DEEP HOLES INTO THE EARTH. IF WE COMPLIED, THE LASHES OF HIS WHIPS WOULD BE FEW. IF WE RESISTED WE WOULD BE FLOGGED UNTIL WE DIED. WITH EVERY PAINFUL SHOVELFUL OF EARTH WE DUG, WE CURSED THAT DEMON'S NAME."
THE LAZARUS AFFAIR
CONTINUING A FOUR-PART NOVEL FEATURING
the BAT MAN
CREATED BY BOB KANE
Indian Ocean
CHAPTER THREE
Infinity Island!
MARV WOLFMAN - WRITER
IRV NOVICK & FRANK McLAUGHLIN - ARTISTS
BEN ODA - LETTERER-ADRIENNE ROY-COLORIST
PAUL LEVITZ - EDITOR

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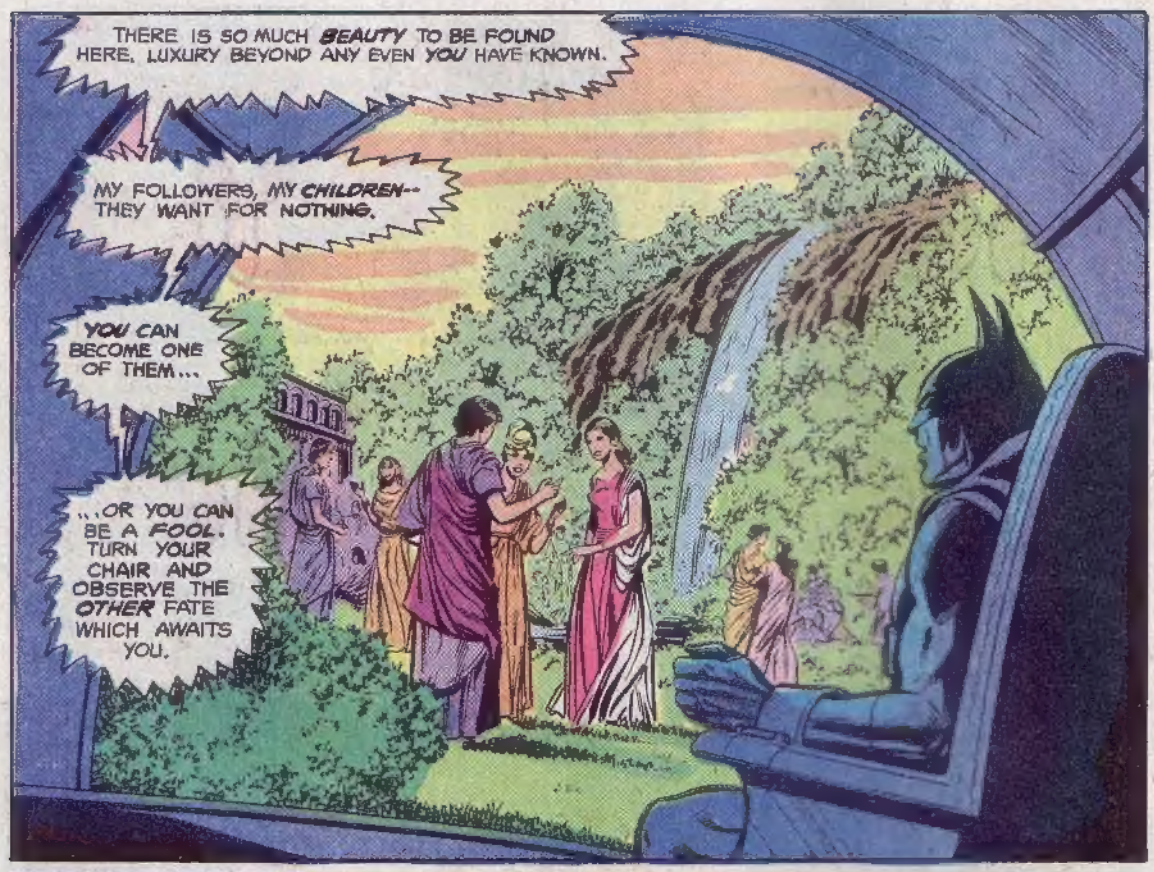
HE HAS BEEN ASLEEP FOR A VERY LONG TIME, AND HIS SLEEP HAS BEEN ANYTHING BUT PEACEFUL...
FOR AS HE SLEPT, HIS UNCONSCIOUS BODY WOULD SHUDDER WITH CONSTANT SPASMS AS IF TRYING TO FIGHT SOME UNSEEN FOE...
BUT THEN HE FELT WARMTH CRAWL OVER HIS BODY. THE NUMBNESS WAS GONE AND HE KNEW HE WAS AWAKENING...
GAS KNOCKED ME OUT...BODY FEELS AS IF IT'S BEEN ASLEEP FOR A DAY OR MORE.
BUT THAT DOESN'T TELL ME WHERE I'VE BEEN TAKEN.
THIS ROOM, FOR ALL ITS SPLENDOR... WHY DO I SENSE IT'S NOTHING MORE THAN A GILDED PRISON?
HE PARTS THE VELVET DRAPES...
OH, MY GOD! WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
IN THE BACK OF THE BATMAN'S MIND HE HEARS A WHISPERED ANSWER: THIS IS HELL! MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME!

THEN, SUDDENLY, ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE...
THEY'RE CRASHING THROUGH--
--AND FROM THE INSANE GLEAM IN THEIR EYES...
SKRAS
I'D DO BEST TO KEEP OUT OF THEIR WAY!
AGGHH! NO GOOD! THEY'RE EVERYWHERE!
SEIZE HIM! BRING THE BATMAN TO ME!
THAT VOICE? WHERE DID IT COME FROM?
HE IS THE BEST THERE IS, THIS CAPED CRUSADER. BUT NOT EVEN HE CAN RESIST THE PUMMELLING FISTS OF SO MANY MIND-CONTROLLED ZOMBIES...
...USELESS... CAN'T FIGHT THEM ALL...
...CAN'T... UNHHHH...
THE JAGGED ROCKS CUT DEEP SCARS INTO HIS BACK AS HE IS UNCEREMONIOUSLY DRAGGED TOWARD A STRANGE GOLD-DOMED BUILDING...
FORTUNATELY FOR THE BATMAN, HE IS LONG SINCE UNCONSCIOUS...
ONCE AGAIN HE SLEEPS FOR A VERY LONG TIME. BUT THEN, FINALLY...
YOUR BODY SIGNS ARE BEING MONITORED. YOU CAN NOT FEIGN UNCONSCIOUSNESS.
OPEN YOUR EYES AND SEE THE WONDERS OF MY CITY BENEATH THE EARTH!
3

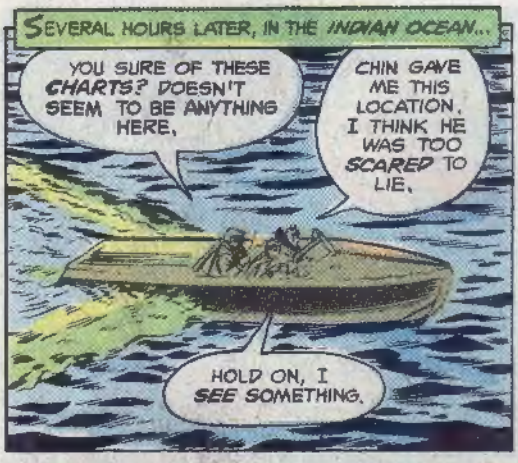

THERE IS SO MUCH BEAUTY TO BE FOUND HERE. LUXURY BEYOND ANY EVEN YOU HAVE KNOWN.
MY FOLLOWERS, MY CHILDREN-- THEY WANT FOR NOTHING.
YOU CAN BECOME ONE OF THEM...
...OR YOU CAN BE A FOOL. TURN YOUR CHAIR AND OBSERVE THE OTHER FATE WHICH AWAITS YOU.

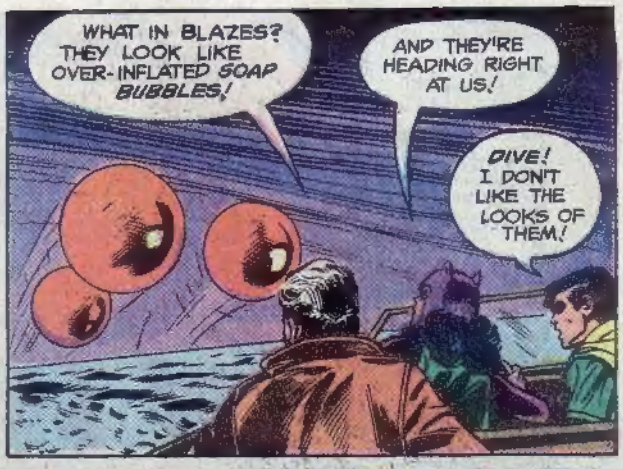
AUTOMATICALLY THE BATMAN'S CHAIR SWIVELS AS THE DOMED WALL BEHIND HIM SLIDES OPEN TO REVEAL...
MY ENEMIES! THEY ARE DISGUSTING MAGGOTS FIT FOR LITTLE MORE THAN SLAVERY IN THE MINES.
WHERE MY LOYAL FOLLOWERS HAVE ALL, THESE PITILESS CRETINS HAVE NOTHING!
NOTHING BUT PAIN AND AGONY. NOTHING BUT HOPELESSNESS AND DESPAIR.
THIS LIVING HELL IS YOUR OTHER POSSIBLE FUTURE.
WHICH FATE SHALL YOU PICK? WHICH FUTURE WILL BE YOURS?
4

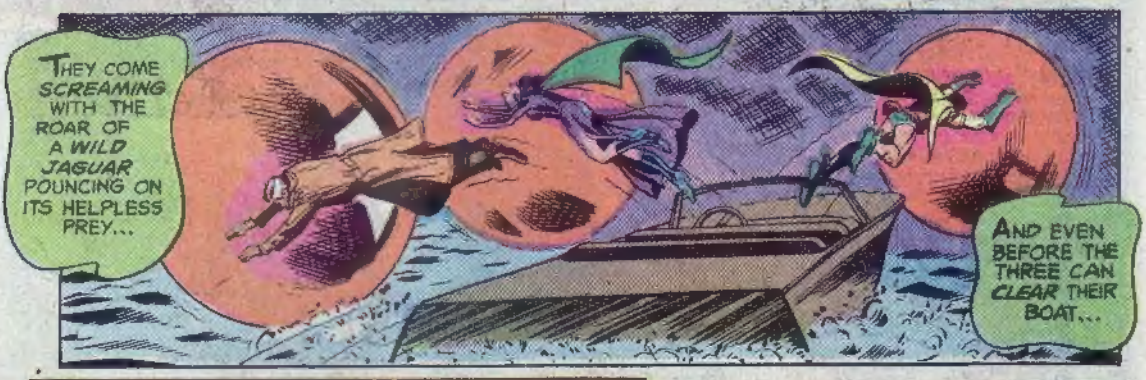
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.

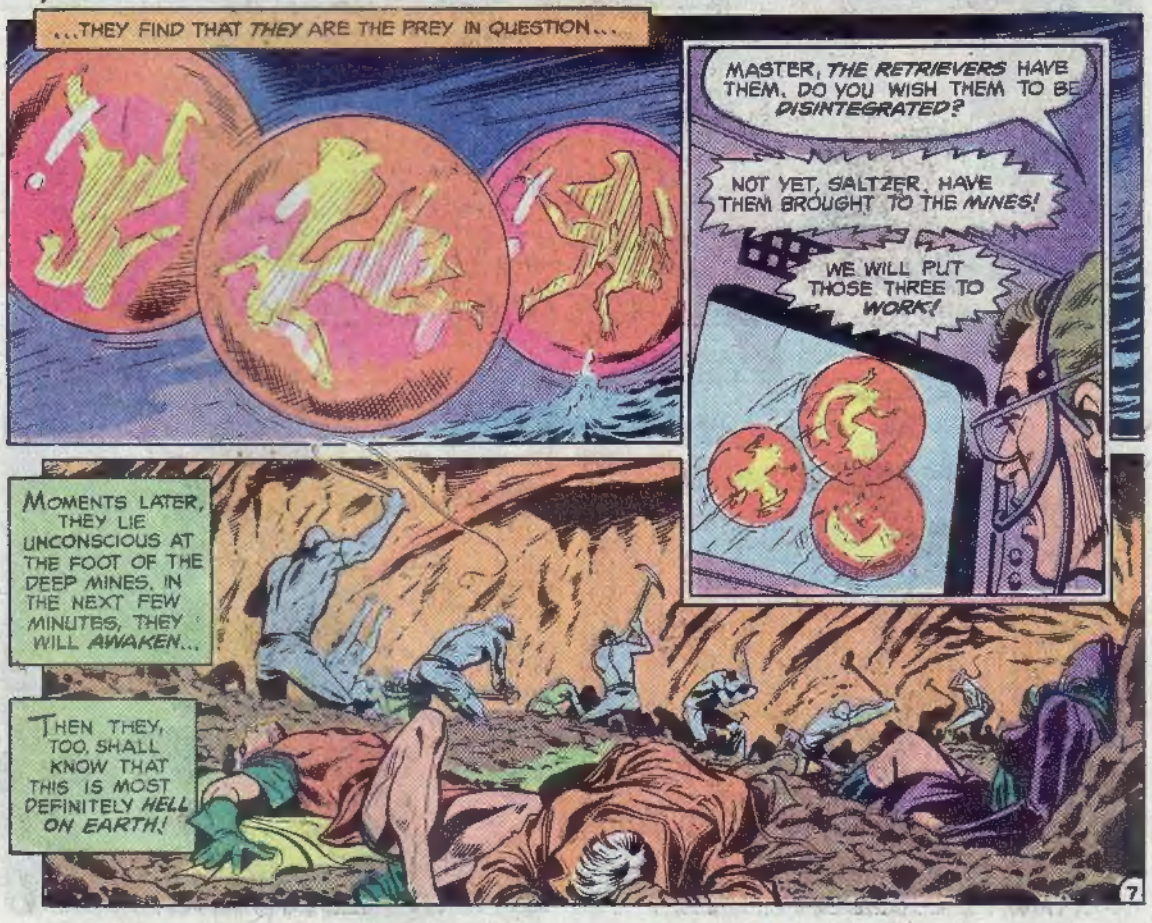
HONG KONG: ON A LITTLE-WALKED STREET, BELOW AN UNNAMED NIGHTCLUB, THERE IS A GREEN ROOM WHICH SPELLS CERTAIN DOOM FOR ROBIN, THE TEEN WONDER, AND THE FORMER CRIMINAL FEMME-FATALE KNOWN AS THE CATWOMAN...
THESE TWO MUST BE ELIMINATED. INJECT THEM WITH ENOUGH OF THE DRUG THAT THE LORD HIMSELF WOULD BE HELPLESS TO QUIET THEIR PAIN.
NO! YOU CAN'T!
ON THE CONTRARY, YOUNG MAN, WE CAN! FOR WHO IS THERE TO STOP US?
SNIK!
FOR STARTERS, CHIN, HOW ABOUT ME!
SWIK!
CATWOMAN! BUT HOW?
DON'T YOU KNOW, CHIN? A CAT USES HER CLAWS WHEN PROVOKED!
ROBIN! GET READY TO MOVE!
ARGHHH!
GOTCHA, CAT!
CHIN'S RUNNING OFF!
FOLLOW HIM, ROBIN. HE'S STILL THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HELP US.
SKRAKK
YOU SURE YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT?
ASIDE FROM THE BATMAN, NO ONE'S EVER STOPPED THE CATWOMAN!
5

END OF THE LINE, CHIN. THIS IS AS FAR AS YOU'RE GOING!
NO!
WHUMP!
FARADAY? SO THIS IS WHERE YOU DISAPPEARED TO?
GOOD TO SEE YOU, KID.
WAS WONDERING WHEN THE CAVALRY WOULD SHOW.
AND, A MOMENT LATER...
KING FARADAY? THEN WE'RE ALL TOGETHER AGAIN.
YEAH. THE THREE MUSKETEERS, THAT'S US! OR MAYBE I SHOULD SAY THE THREE STOOGES!
CHIN HERE STILL WON'T TALK!
HE WILL, FARADAY... UNLESS HE WANTS A DOSE OF HIS OWN FILTHY MEDICINE.
NO... NO! PLEASE, DO NOT DO THAT TO ME!
I'M STILL WAITING FOR ANSWERS, CHIN.
AND, AS SOON AS THE HONG KONG POLICE ARRIVE...
WOULD YOU REALLY HAVE USED THOSE DRUGS ON HIM?
THEN YOU BOTH DIDN'T NOTICE... THE SYRINGE WAS EMPTY.
FORTUNATELY, HE DIDN'T CALL MY BLUFF!
POLICE
THERE ARE SOME BENEFITS IN HAVING A RATHER UNSCRUPULOUS PAST.
THREATS ARE TAKEN VERY SERIOUSLY!
POLICE
6


SEVERAL HOURS LATER, IN THE INDIAN OCEAN...
YOU SURE OF THESE CHARTS? DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANYTHING HERE.
CHIN GAVE ME THIS LOCATION. I THINK HE WAS TOO SCARED TO LIE.
HOLD ON, I SEE SOMETHING.


WHAT IN BLAZES? THEY LOOK LIKE OVER-INFLATED SOAP BUBBLES!
AND THEY'RE HEADING RIGHT AT US!
DIVE! I DON'T LIKE THE LOOKS OF THEM!


THEY COME SCREAMING WITH THE ROAR OF A WILD JAGUAR POUNCING ON ITS HELPLESS PREY...
AND EVEN BEFORE THE THREE CAN CLEAR THEIR BOAT...


...THEY FIND THAT THEY ARE THE PREY IN QUESTION...
MASTER, THE RETRIEVERS HAVE THEM. DO YOU WISH THEM TO BE DISINTEGRATED?
NOT YET, SALTZER. HAVE THEM BROUGHT TO THE MINES!
WE WILL PUT THOSE THREE TO WORK!
MOMENTS LATER, THEY LIE UNCONSCIOUS AT THE FOOT OF THE DEEP MINES. IN THE NEXT FEW MINUTES, THEY WILL AWAKEN...
THEN THEY, TOO, SHALL KNOW THAT THIS IS MOST DEFINITELY HELL ON EARTH!

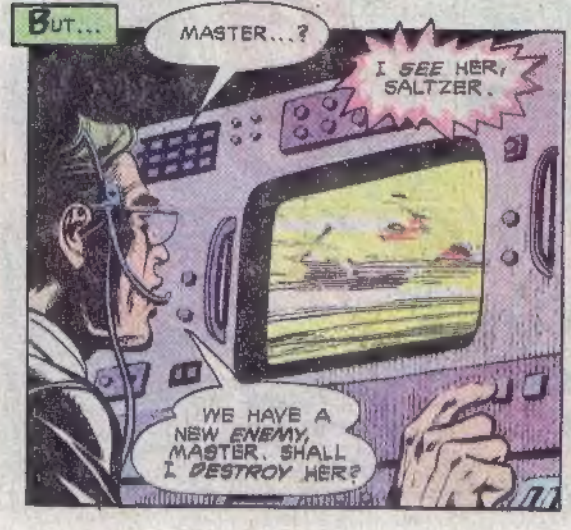
IN THE DARKNESS OF THE MINES, TALIA SILENTLY WATCHES AS THE THREE ARE AWAKENED BY THE STING OF ELECTRIC LASHES.
ZING!
HER BEAUTIFUL FACE BETRAYS NO EMOTION...

STILL SILENT, SHE TURNS AND LEAVES, SHE HAS A MISSION ELSEWHERE...

HER SLIM FINGERS TIGHTEN ABOUT THE GRIP OF HER SPECIAL GUN...

SHE WASTES NO TIME SCURRYING UP THE STEPS TO THE GOLD DOME, INDEED SHE DOESN'T PAUSE FOR EVEN A MOMENT UNTIL...
TALIA!
WE DID NOT KNOW YOU--

SHE TAKES A LONG SWALLOW OF BURNING HOT AIR AND FINALLY CROSSES THE LINE OF COMMITMENT...



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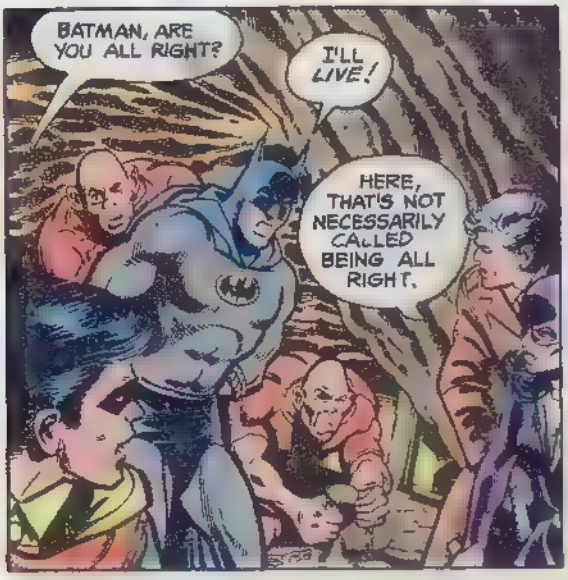
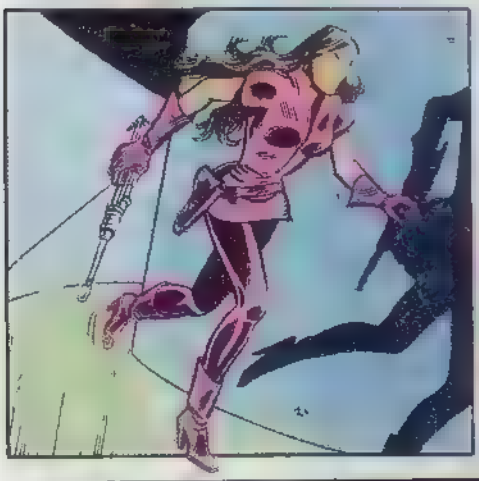
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

HEAR US OUT. THROUGH GREGORIAN FALSTAFF WE HAVE ALREADY TAKEN CONTROL OVER THE OIL INTERESTS HELD BY YOU AS BRUCE WAYNE.
YOU KNOW WHO I AM.
WE KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU.
AND WE HAVE ALREADY TAKEN STEPS TO INSURE THAT WAYNE ENTERPRISES ITSELF WILL SOON BE OURS.
ALL THAT YOU HAVE BUILT UP, WE WILL SOON OWN.
WE HAVE EVERYTHING THAT WAS YOURS ... INCLUDING YOUR FRIENDS.
YOU... SCUM!
NAME CALLING? HOW UNCHARACTERISTIC!
CHOOSE, BATMAN. BECOME ONE OF US, OR GO TO THE MINES.
CHOOSE-- BETWEEN HEAVEN OR HELL!
UNHH!
I CHOOSE HELL, AND TO HELL WITH YOU!
SO SAD, AND SO PREDICTABLE!
MUTATES, TAKE HIM TO THE MINES!
AND...
CATWOMAN, LOOK! IT'S BATMAN!
SO MUCH FOR THE LAST MINUTE RESCUE!
FARADAY, SHUT YOUR MOUTH, OR I'LL SHUT IT FOR YOU!

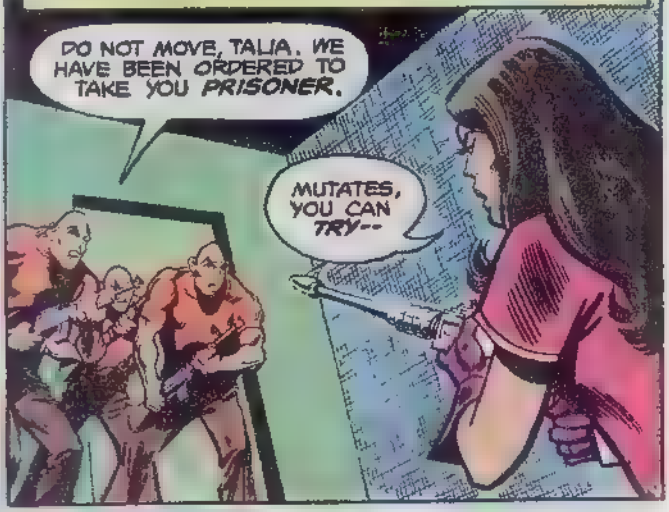


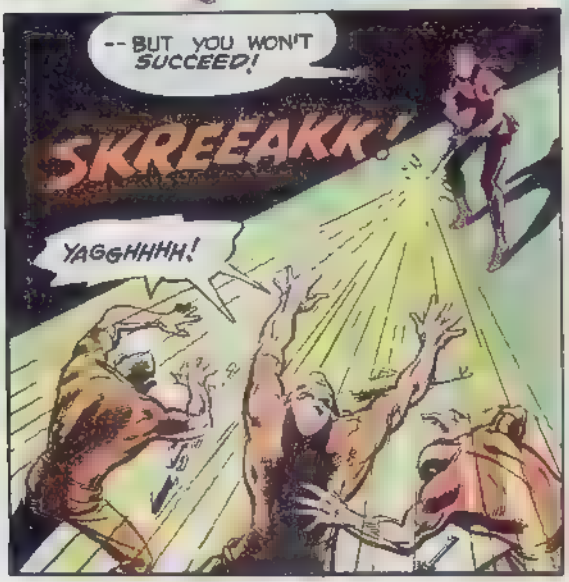
I SHOULD SAY I'M SURPRISED TO SEE YOU HERE, CATWOMAN. BUT I'M NOT.
WE CAN TALK ABOUT US ANOTHER TIME, BATMAN--
RIGHT NOW I THINK IT'S TIME TO PLAN OUR ESCAPE.

TALIA RACES THROUGH THE ENDLESS MAZE-LIKE CORRIDORS WITH SURPRISING SPEED AND ASSURANCE. NEVER ONCE DOES SHE TAKE A WRONG TUNNEL OR MAKE A MIS-STEP...

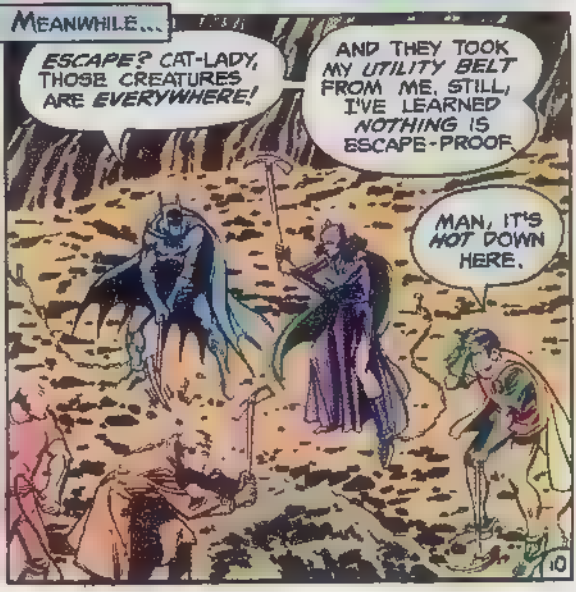


TALIA IS GRIM. SHE KNOWS HOW LITTLE TIME IS LEFT. WHAT SHE MUST DO MUST BE DONE QUICKLY, OR...

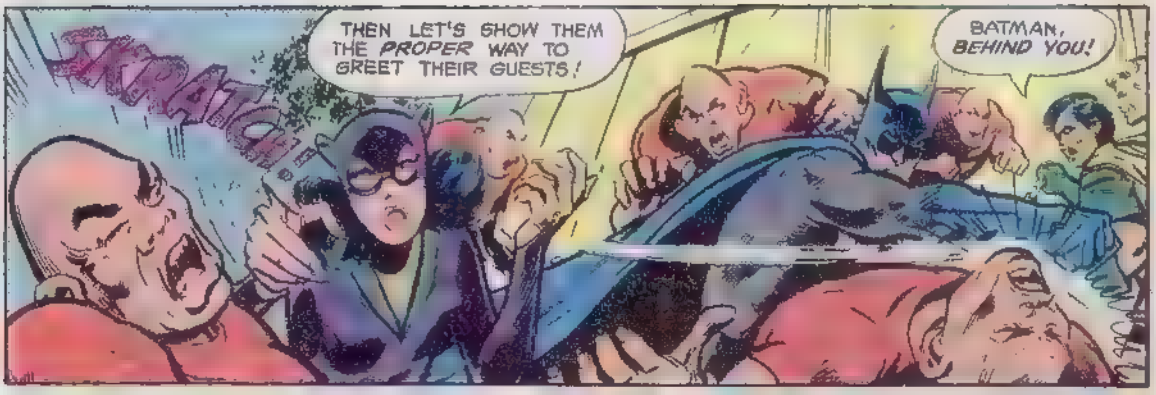


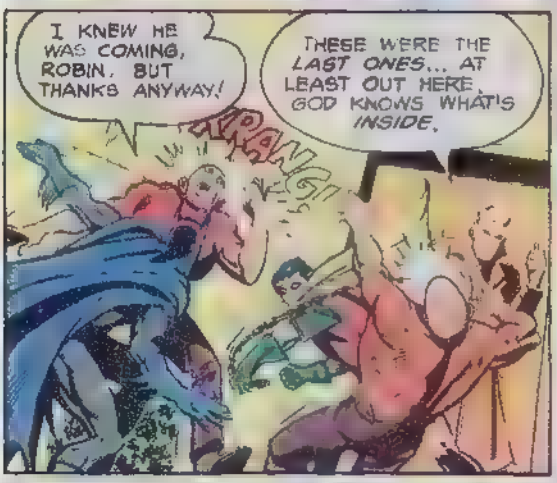


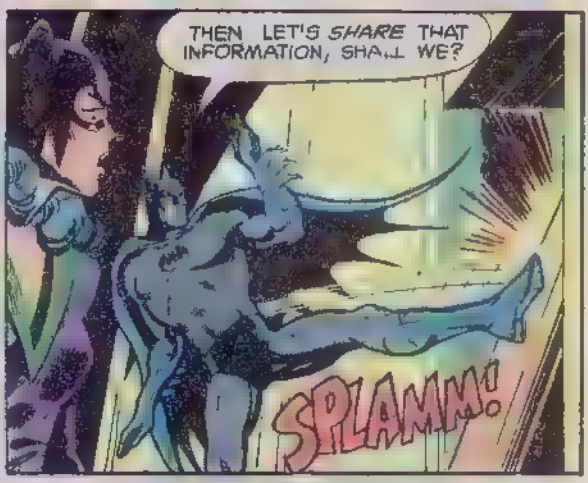
MEANWHILE...

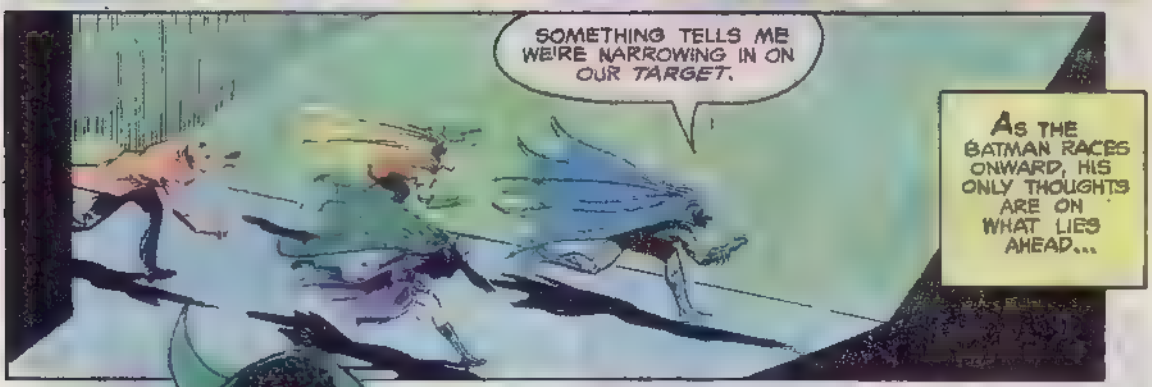

ESCAPE? CAT-LADY, THOSE CREATURES ARE EVERYWHERE!
AND THEY TOOK MY UTILITY BELT FROM ME. STILL, I'VE LEARNED NOTHING IS ESCAPE-PROOF.
MAN, IT'S HOT DOWN HERE.

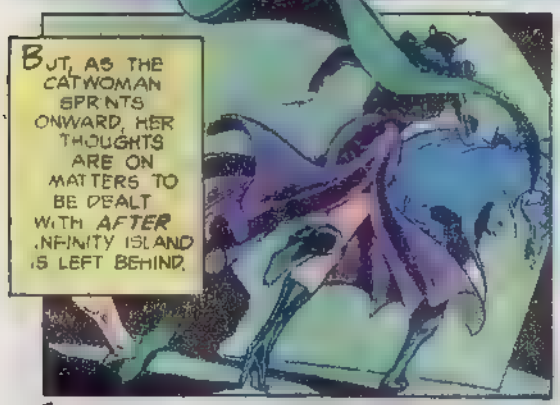
YOU! PUT SOME MUSCLE INTO YOUR DIGGING!
AGGHH!
THAT TEARS IT! WE MOVE--
SKAK!
NOW!!
CHUK!
CHUK!
CHUK!
CHUK!
HURRY! THESE CREATURES MAY LOOK STUPID, BUT THEY'RE NOT!
I DUNNO ABOUT THAT, BATMAN.
THIS ONE'S HEAD SOUNDS HOLLOW!
CLANG!
CLANG!
SO WE GET FREE, THEN WHAT?
HEAD FOR THE DOME! THE ONE RUNNING THIS SLAVE RING LIVES THERE!
AND HE'S THE MAN I WANT!
GRUNG!
THE SLAVES HERE ARE TOO FAR GONE TO HELP NOW. WE'LL COME BACK FOR THEM LATER.
BUT AS THEIR SAVIORS OR THEIR FELLOW DIGGERS?
SWANG!
WE'RE ALMOST THERE!
YEAH, AND IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'VE ROLLED OUT THE WELCOME WAGON FOR US.





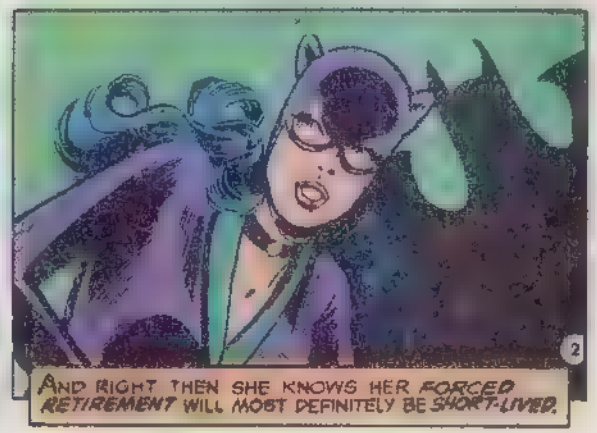






SHE WILL HAVE MANY ***DECISIONS*** TO MAKE AND SHE WONDERS WHICH ONE SHE WILL CHOOSE.

FOR SHE SUDDENLY FEELS VERY MUCH *ALIVE*. THE BATTLE HAS *INVIGORATED* HER ... *THRILLED* HER...



BEHIND THERE, I'M CERTAIN THAT'S THE CENTRAL CORE!
THEN WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?
HOW ABOUT THE KEY?
BUT JUST BEYOND THE DOOR...
TALIA, WE SHOULD NOT BE ENEMIES, THE TWO OF US.
I AGREE, BUT I HAVEN'T ANY CHOICE.
YOU DO... IF YOU WISH TO TAKE HOLD OF MY HAND, IT IS TIME!
N-NO! YOU'RE LYING! IT CAN'T BE, NOT ALREADY!
BUT, JUST THEN...
TALIA!
THEN YOU ARE INVOLVED WITH THIS... AS I THOUGHT!
YOU KNEW? AND YOU LET HER BRING YOU HERE?
I SUSPECTED FROM THE BEGINNING; THERE WERE SIMPLY TOO MANY COINCIDENCES.
BUT I NEEDED TO LEARN ALL THE FACTS!
THEN YOU THOUGHT WRONG OF ME, MY LOVE.
I SWEAR I AM NOT YOUR ENEMY.
INDEED, I CAME HERE TO SAVE YOU!
13
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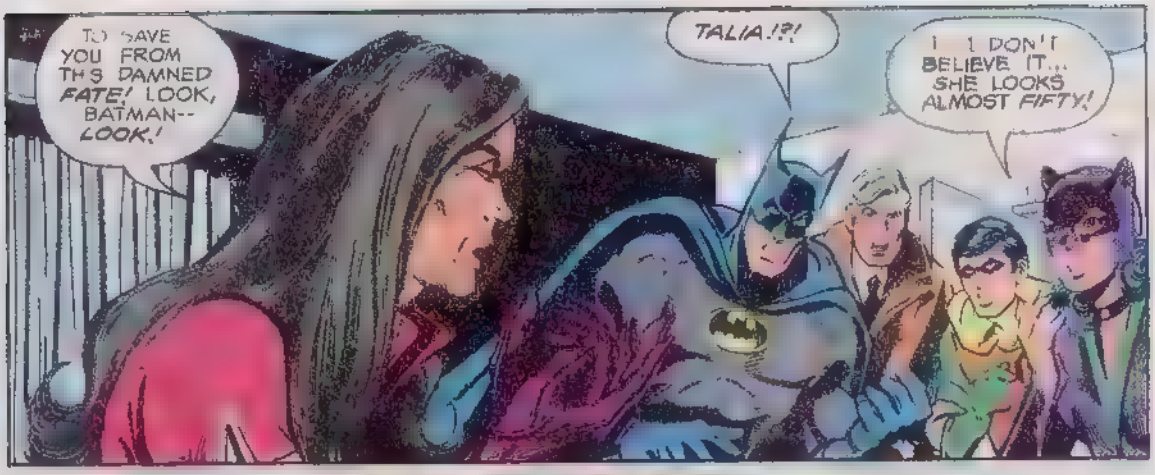
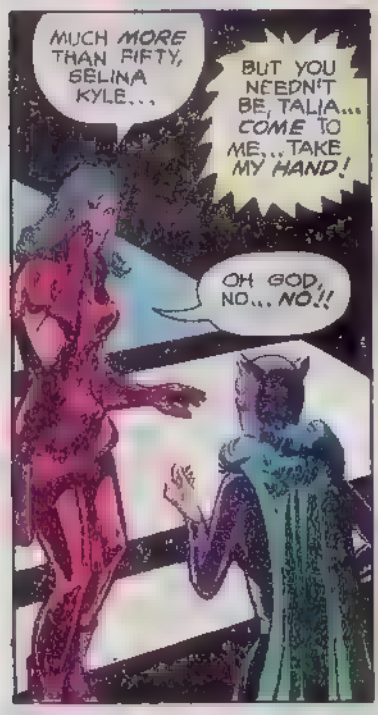
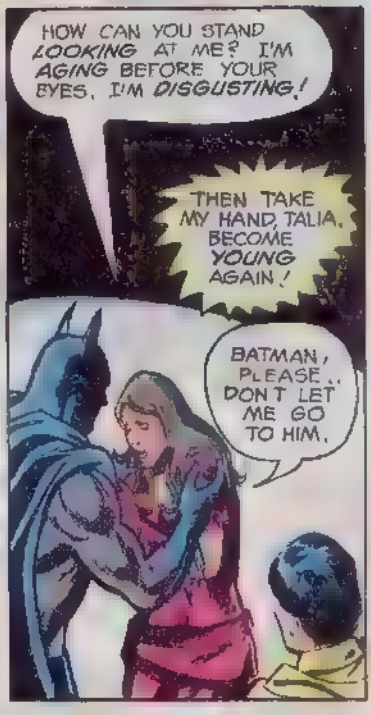
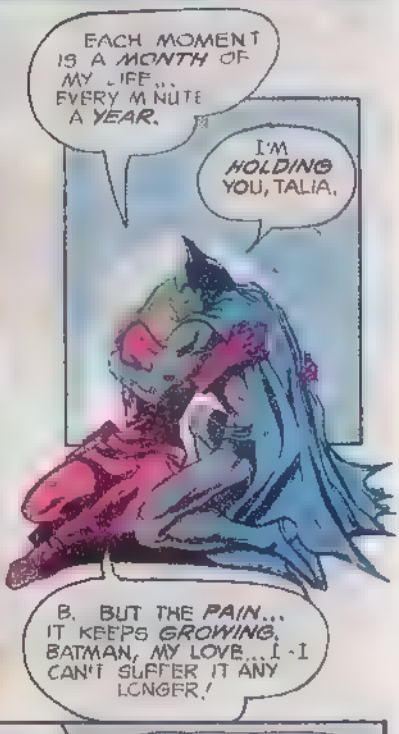
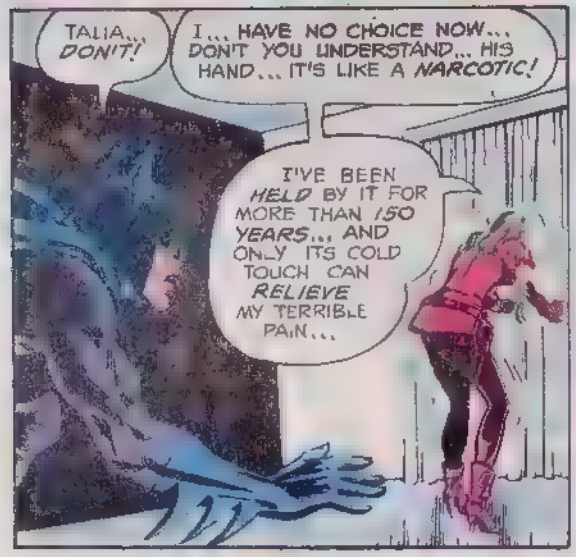
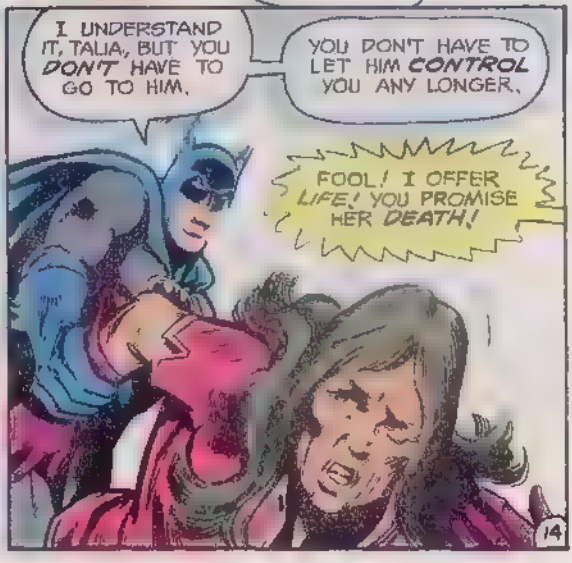

TO SAVE YOU FROM THIS DAMNED FATE! LOOK, BATMAN-- LOOK!
TALIA!?!
I... I DON'T BELIEVE IT... SHE LOOKS ALMOST FIFTY!


MUCH MORE THAN FIFTY, SELINA KYLE...
BUT YOU NEEDN'T BE, TALIA... COME TO ME... TAKE MY HAND!
OH GOD, NO... NO!!


HOW CAN YOU STAND LOOKING AT ME? I'M AGING BEFORE YOUR EYES. I'M DISGUSTING!
THEN TAKE MY HAND, TALIA. BECOME YOUNG AGAIN!
BATMAN, PLEASE.. DON'T LET ME GO TO HIM.

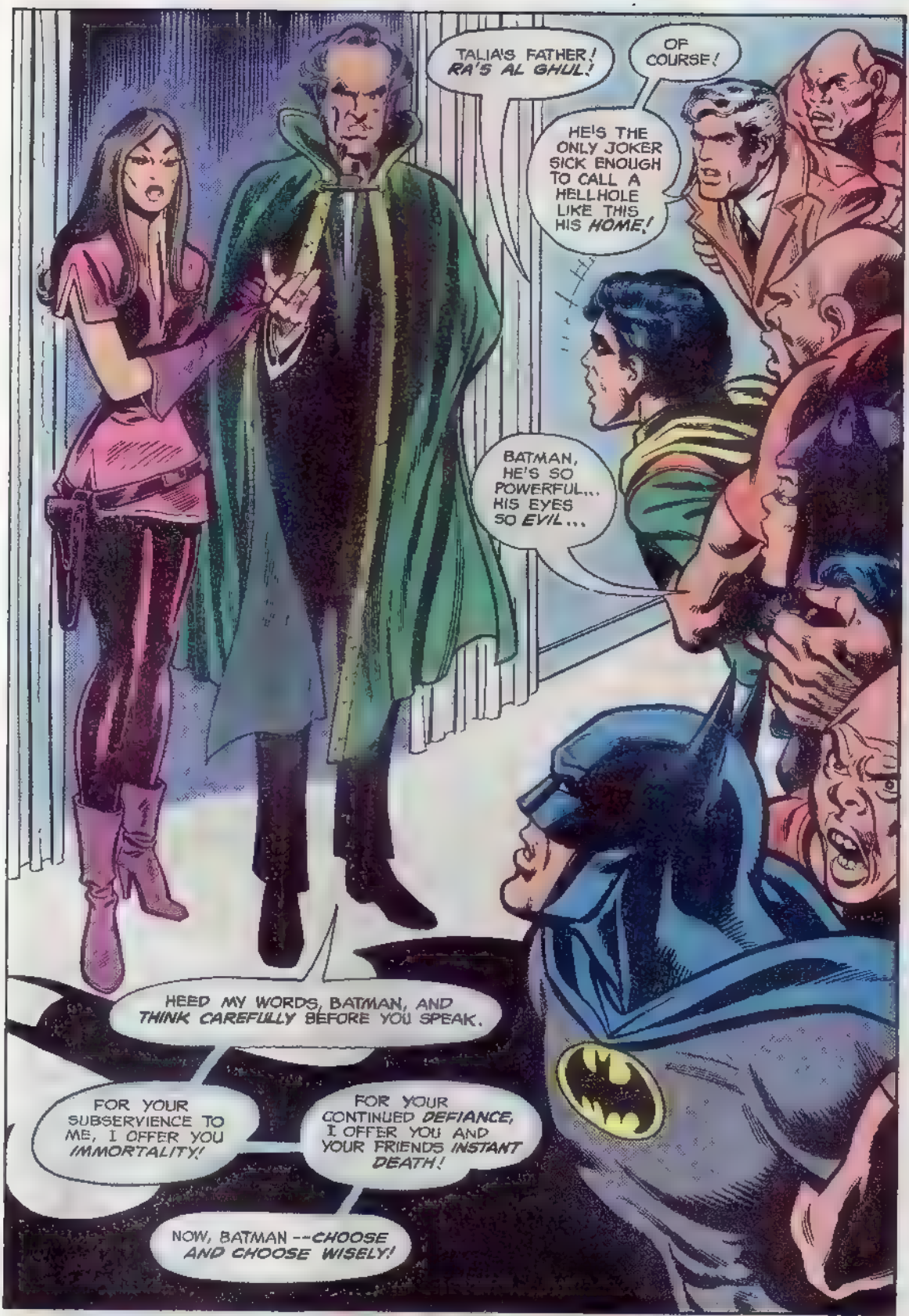

EACH MOMENT IS A MONTH OF MY LIFE... EVERY MINUTE A YEAR.
I'M HOLDING YOU, TALIA.
B. BUT THE PAIN... IT KEEPS GROWING, BATMAN, MY LOVE... I-I CAN'T SUFFER IT ANY LONGER!


TALIA... DON'T!
I... HAVE NO CHOICE NOW... DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND... HIS HAND... IT'S LIKE A NARCOTIC!
I'VE BEEN HELD BY IT FOR MORE THAN 150 YEARS... AND ONLY ITS COLD TOUCH CAN RELIEVE MY TERRIBLE PAIN...


I UNDERSTAND IT, TALIA, BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO TO HIM.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO LET HIM CONTROL YOU ANY LONGER.
FOOL! I OFFER LIFE! YOU PROMISE HER DEATH!

MUTATES! STOP THOSE WHO INTERFERE TALIA WISHES TO REJOIN US.
WHAT IN BLAZES IS GOING ON?
KID, YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE LEFT IN THE DARK.
WHAT'S GOING ON DOESN'T MATTER... NOT IF WE WANT TO LIVE.
CAT-LADY, FOR ONCE WE AGREE!
WHUMP!
SKRAGG!
TALIA, DON'T GO, DON'T GO!
ZUMP!
THE FEMALE MUST DO AS SHE MUST AND YOU WILL NOT INTERFERE!
FORGOT HOW STRONG THESE MUTATES ARE WHEN THEY CONNECT.
ZOK
I LET TALIA'S PROBLEM BLIND ME FOR AN INSTANT. CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN AGAIN.
DEAD, I CAN'T HELP HER!
KRAKKO!
THEY MAY BE STRONG, BUT THEY'RE ALSO... CLUMSY!
BUT NOT CLUMSY ENOUGH, YOU LITTLE FOOL!
ROBIN, WATCH OUT!
YOUR WARNING COMES TOO LATE, BATMAN!
KRRRAAAM!
15

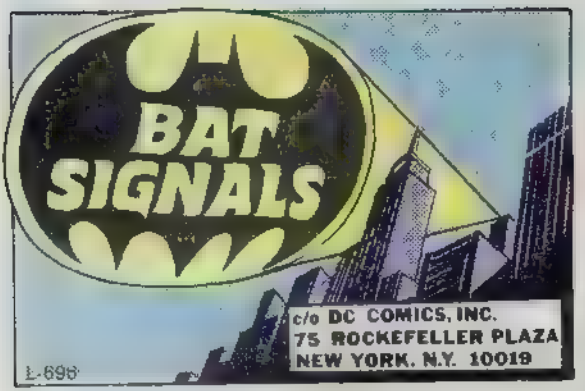
AND, A MOMENT LATER THE FIGHT IS OVER...
BATMAN, YOU HAVE LOST... ON ALL COUNTS.
LOST YOUR FIGHT. LOST YOUR FINANCIAL EMPIRE... AND NOW YOU'VE LOST TALIA!
PLEASE, MY LOVE... UNDERSTAND... I LOVE YOU, BUT... BUT I HAVE NO CHOICE...
BATMAN, WHO IS SHE GOING TO? WHO?
CAN'T YOU GUESS, ROBIN? I'VE KNOWN ALMOST FROM THE BEGINNING.
WHO ELSE COULD HAVE BEEN THE POWER BEHIND GREGORIAN FALSTAFF?
WHO ELSE HAS ALWAYS BEEN ONE STEP AHEAD OF ME?
I ALWAYS KNEW WHO I WAS FACING... JUST NEVER WHAT HE WANTED
WHO, BATMAN? WHO IS IT?
AS THE CURTAINS SLOWLY PART...
TALIA IS MINE ONCE AGAIN. MADE IMMORTAL BY MY TOUCH.
AND NOW, BATMAN, I OFFER THE SAME TO YOU!


TALIA'S FATHER! RA'S AL GHUL!
OF COURSE!
HE'S THE ONLY JOKER SICK ENOUGH TO CALL A HELLHOLE LIKE THIS HIS HOME!
BATMAN, HE'S SO POWERFUL... HIS EYES SO EVIL...
HEED MY WORDS, BATMAN, AND THINK CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU SPEAK.
FOR YOUR SUBSERVIENCE TO ME, I OFFER YOU IMMORTALITY!
FOR YOUR CONTINUED DEFIANCE, I OFFER YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS INSTANT DEATH!
NOW, BATMAN --CHOOSE AND CHOOSE WISELY!

NEXT MONTH: THE FINAL CHAPTER!

ON SALE FEBRUARY 5TH

COMMISSIONER GORDON in "WHODUNIT"
STORY · ROZAKIS · ART: STATON & McLAUGHLIN
--IT WAS THE VICTIM'S OWN GUN, WHICH HE KEPT IN HIS FILING CABINET, COMMISSIONER!
WE'VE GOT THREE SUSPECTS... AND NONE OF THEM HAVE ALIBIS!
LOLA STANS, THE VICTIM'S SECRETARY...
...DAVE GREBER, HIS BUSINESS PARTNER...
AND HIS WIDOW, BETTY VAN THON!
ALL THREE KNEW THE GUN WAS KEPT IN THE FILING CABINET AND ANY ONE OF THEM COULD HAVE TAKEN IT!
I SEE!
HAVE YOU EVER FIRED A GUN, GREBER?
QUITE OFTEN, COMMISSIONER! IN FACT, BOB VAN THON AND I USED HIS GUN FOR SOME TARGET PRACTICE JUST THIS MORNING!
ALL OF VAN THON'S BUSINESS RECORDS ARE IN THE FILING CABINET?
RIGHT, SIR!
ANY FINGERPRINTS?
NOT A ONE, SIR! THE GUN AND THE CABINET WERE BOTH WIPED CLEAN!
HMM! IN THAT CASE, THE MURDERER HAS TO BE --
--YOU, MRS. VAN THON!
B-BUT HOW DID YOU KNOW?
SIMPLE, REALLY! MISS STANS REGULARLY USED THE FILING CABINET... MR. GREBER HANDLED THE GUN THIS MORNING! ONLY SOMEONE WHOSE FINGERPRINTS SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ON THE GUN OR THE CABINET WOULD HAVE WIPED THEM OFF!
THE OTHERS BOTH HAD LOGICAL REASONS FOR THEIR FINGERPRINTS TO BE THERE!
End.



Dear Editor,

The importance of Marv Wolfman's arrival at DC seems to grow larger with each successive story he turns in. Not only have his stories been good, but they've also revealed something about Wolfman, the individual. His two-part Two-Face story in *BATMAN* was not only a darn good mystery-detective tale, but it also showed remarkable sensitivity. Other writers have been able to handle Two-Face the criminal just as well, but it has been years since anyone showed us him as the tortured and pathetic Harvey Dent. True, he has always been tortured and pathetic, but never as human as in #328 and 329. And finally, Marv showed us the hopeful side to the famous criminal and his dilemma.

Personally, "Twice Dies the Batman" was the first so-called mystery that I didn't figure out and this itself made it a milestone. Like part one, Marv returned to Two-Face's 1940s origins for inspiration. Part of this was the resurrection of Boss Maroni and the return of Gilda as an influential person. As the story progressed and Two-Face's plot came closer to reality, my sympathy for the character also increased because his motivation was love. It was a fine touch to show that Harvey Dent was not only keeping tabs on his ex-wife, but also was looking out for her happiness. However twisted his acts were here Dent was still demonstrating his love for Gilda.

The final showdown was absolutely perfect, mostly because the excitement did not come from a fight scene but from a psychological catharsis. Dent was forced to re-live his living nightmare not only through the film, but through the physical presence of the courtroom and Gilda. Her role as the voice of conscience and as the reminder of the old Dent set up a dramatic precedent—Two-Face's rejection of the two-headed coin. In a way this rejection was symbolic of Dent's apparent rejection of his criminal life. That the story ended on such a hopeful note was not only surprising, but it was welcome as well. In the end Marv reaffirmed Batman's reason for existing as well as his often overlooked humane side. Finally, I think I'd like to see Two-Face legitimately reform with or without an operation. I think it would be wise to reform him before he outlives his usefulness as an adversary. In other words it would be good for Two-Face to quit while he's on top.

Tony Edwards
454 N. Formosa Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90036

#329 elicited a number of reader requests for Two-Face's reform, a possibility we admit we had never truly considered, especially with the Catwoman having gone that route so recently. But we'll pass it on to new regular Batman writer Roy Thomas, who takes over after the conclusion of "The Lazarus Affair." For those of you unfamiliar with Roy's name, we'll simply say that he's been the leading light of Marvel's writing and editorial staff for fifteen years, and is our personal choice for best comics writer in the business. Need we add we're glad to have him here?—PL

• • • • •

Dear Editor:

BATMAN #329 is proof positive that a comic book can be very entertaining without being "special." The story featured the usual writer/artist team, no one died, and you didn't advertise it as being "special." You had the perfect sense while reading it that this was a normal, everyday issue of *BATMAN*.

And that very thing made it one of the most enjoyable Batman tales I've ever read. The storyline picked up very well from #328, with Batman escaping not one, but two death traps (in the first three pages yet) and then going home, and exercising the next morning! Don't his muscles ever get any rest?! We are then treated to a poignant scene between Harvey and the love of his life, Gilda. Page 6, however, was a disappointment. Marv wrote the scene expecting us to be shocked out of our skulls when Carl was revealed to be Two-Face. Even if you ignore the cover and the fact that *The Comic Reader* told us all, the storyline made it all too obvious (even in #328) to be even at all shocked when Harvey showed that green head of his.

Batman's confrontation with Gilda on page 8 has to be the best scene in the book. I could just sense how shocked she was when Carl (Harvey) left her, how much MORE shocked she was to see Batman, and how she must have been going out of her head when he told her that Carl was her first husband, Harvey. (Gosh, if I wasn't surprised to find Carl was Harvey, SHE sure was.) The next scene, with Two-Face being tormented by his own coin, and then swearing that he would kill the Batman, was just as precious.

Well, if you can't fool me the first time, try again. This time you did a much better job. I have to admit that I didn't guess that Batman was posing as "Boss" Maroni until Two-Face did. That made the scene a lot more touching for me. The irony of a vicious guy like Two-Face being reduced to insanity was too much to bear. I admit he's been portrayed as insane before, but not quite like he was on page 13.

The next page was even more striking, as Batman was searching for the Harvey Dent in Two-Face. The one way to do it was to show that film, I'll admit, but wasn't that a bit cruel to Two-Face? Two-Face's delusions that "killing" his past would cure it were really stopped by Gilda. That about wraps up the issue, and I must say that those last three pages were truly touching. Thank you for a beautiful piece of entertainment.

David Glenn
339 Brookshire Dr.
Columbia, S.C. 29210

One of the debates we've often had with our fellow editors and writers is whether or not "special" issues are important, or is a consistently high quality product the best possible solution. We've always leaned towards regularity, and therefore thank you for your testimonial.—PL

• • • • •

Dear Paul:

There is really no one word to describe the excellence of *BATMAN* #329, so I won't even attempt it. I enjoyed the story immensely from Batman's persistent tracking of "Carl Termion" to Two-Face's bitter recollections of the past to Gilda's invaluable assistance to aid the man who was her husband, Harvey Dent.

With just two issues Marv Wolfman has already exceeded my expectations of a Batman scripter and the Novick/McLaughlin art was just gorgeous.

The Batman and Robin back-up tale was good on all counts too. The sub-plot involving Dr. Phillips thinking that Batman was unfeeling for not visiting Mary Ann was amusing. The Batman cares more than most people would realize so that last panel of the story was great.

Karen Wu
851 Tantau Avenue
California, 95014

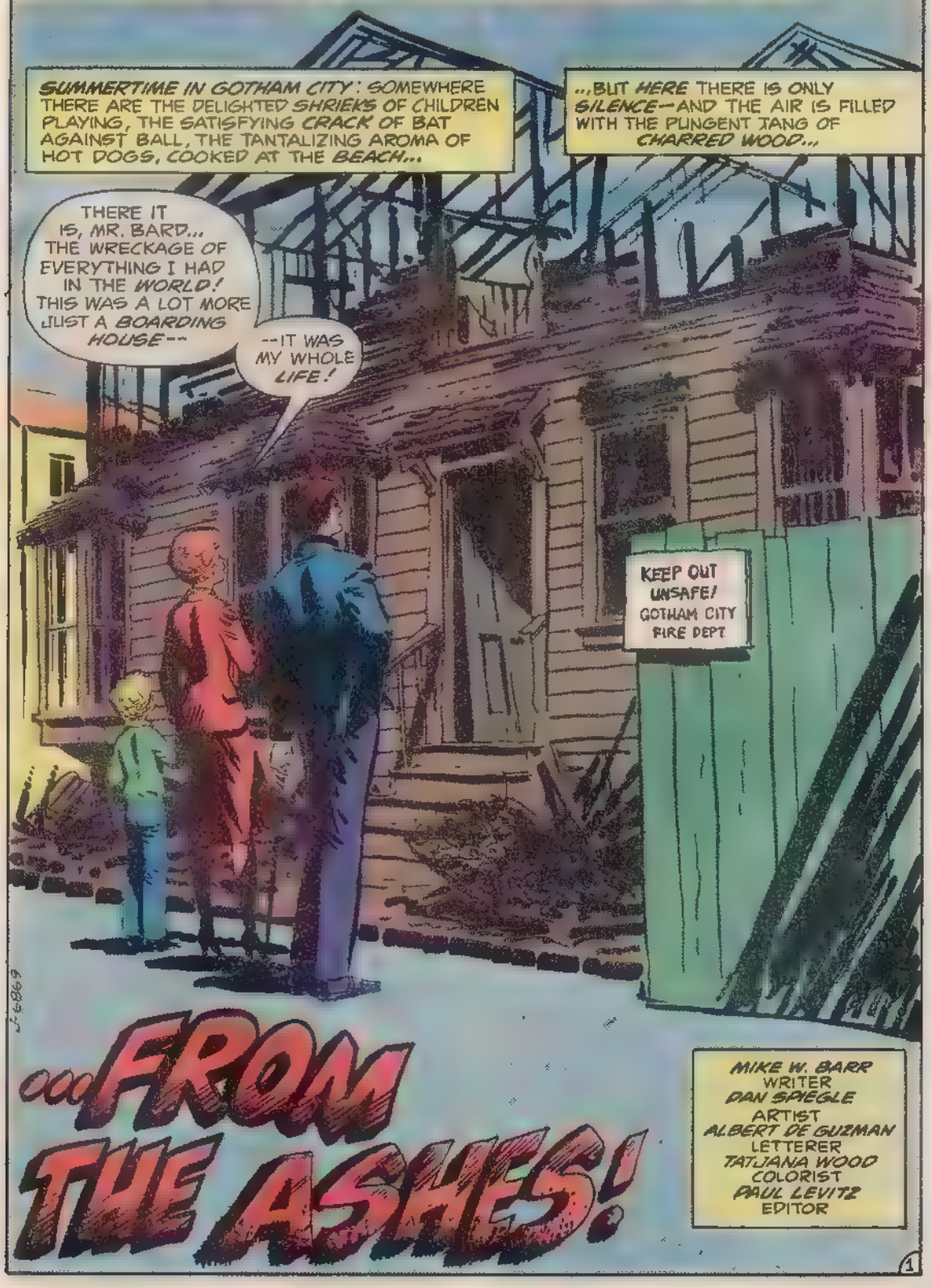
NEXT MONTH: THE PAYOFF—"Ashes To Ashes!"—a 25 page novel length thriller that knocked our socks off! Wait till you see what it does to you!—Paul Levitz.

• • • • •

NOW ON SALE! *DC COMICS PRESENTS #32 ** FLASH #296 ** JUSTICE LEAGUE #189 (The JLA's first foe is back!) ** SUPERMAN #358 ** WONDER WOMAN #278 ** TEEN TITANS #6 ** and WORLD'S FINEST #268!*

COMING ATTRACTIONS! *SUPERBOY #16 ** LEGION #274 ** BRAVE & BOLD #173 (Batman and Green Lantern in star spanning action!) ** SUPER FRIENDS #43 ** GREEN LANTERN #139 ** WARLORD #44 ** ACTION #518 ** DIAL H FOR HERO #480 ** and DETECTIVE #501 (Batman unravels a mystery surrounding Lucius Fox, Alfred Pennyworth and "The Man Who Murdered Mlle. Marie" —plus a new Batgirl story!*

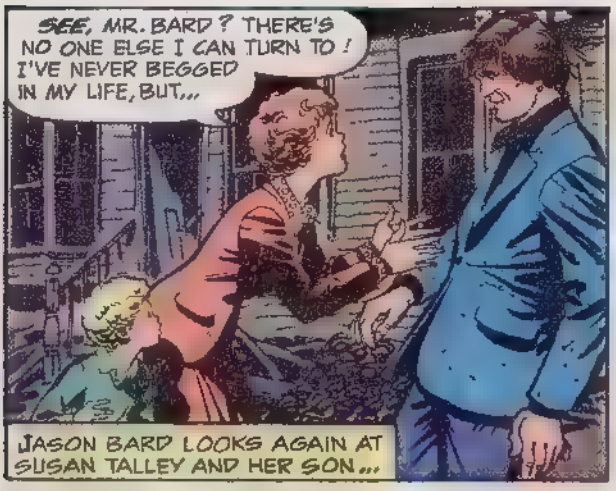
TALES of GOTHAM CITY


SUMMERTIME IN GOTHAM CITY: SOMEWHERE THERE ARE THE DELIGHTED SHRIEKS OF CHILDREN PLAYING, THE SATISFYING CRACK OF BAT AGAINST BALL, THE TANTALIZING AROMA OF HOT DOGS, COOKED AT THE BEACH...
...BUT HERE THERE IS ONLY SILENCE—AND THE AIR IS FILLED WITH THE PUNGENT TANG OF CHARRED WOOD...
THERE IT IS, MR. BARD... THE WRECKAGE OF EVERYTHING I HAD IN THE WORLD! THIS WAS A LOT MORE THAN JUST A BOARDING HOUSE--
--IT WAS MY WHOLE LIFE!
KEEP OUT UNSAFE! GOTHAM CITY FIRE DEPT

...FROM THE ASHES!

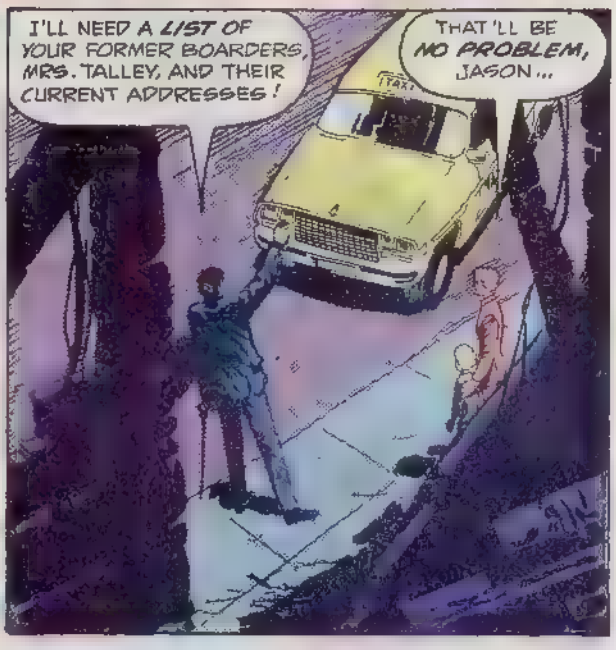
MIKE W. BARR
WRITER
DAN SPIEGLE
ARTIST
ALBERT DE GUZMAN
LETTERER
TATJANA WOOD
COLORIST
PAUL LEVITZ
EDITOR

HAVE YOU DECIDED, MR. BARD?
WILL YOU FIND WHOEVER SET FIRE TO MY HOUSE? I--I CAN'T PAY YOU MUCH, BUT--
MONEY'S NOT THE PROBLEM, MRS TALLEY..
...I HAVEN'T TAKEN A CASE FOR WEEKS...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND--
WHAT CAN I TELL HER? I BECAME A DETECTIVE TO FIND MY FATHER, TO MAKE HIM PAY FOR KILLING MY MOTHER...
--I THOUGHT I'D BE HAPPY WHEN I FINALLY CAUGHT HIM*, BUT INSTEAD IT'S ALL GONE SOUR! I DON'T SEE MUCH SENSE IN CONTINUING MY SO-CALLED "CAREER"... WHAT'S THE USE?
*SEE DETECTIVE #491--PG
MRS TALLEY, THERE'S NOTHING I CAN--
PLEASE, MR BARD-- THE INSURANCE COMPANY THINKS I BURNED MY HOUSE DOWN! THEY WON'T PAY, UNLESS--
--UNLESS YOU CAN PROVE SOMEONE ELSE TORCHED YOUR HOUSE!
MR. ALGREN!
HELLO, ALGREN-- STILL PRYING OPEN COFFINS FOR GOTHAM INSURANCE?
VERY FUNNY, BARD--BUT WHAT I SAID GOES! SUSAN TALLEY WON'T GET A DIME FROM US, AND NEITHER WILL HER EX-HUSBAND...
...UNTIL SHE PROVES SHE DIDN'T TORCH HER OWN HOUSE! AND SHE CAN'T PROVE SHE DIDN'T--
--BECAUSE SHE DID! DON'T COME OUT OF "RETIREMENT" FOR THIS ONE, BARD... IT'S A SURE LOSER!
2
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING


SEE, MR. BARD? THERE'S NO ONE ELSE I CAN TURN TO! I'VE NEVER BEGGED IN MY LIFE, BUT...
JASON BARD LOOKS AGAIN AT SUSAN TALLEY AND HER SON...

...AND REMEMBERS ANOTHER WOMAN, RAISING A SON ON HER OWN! A WOMAN WHO SORELY NEEDED HELP, BUT WHO WAS ALWAYS DENIED IT!
HIS MOTHER!
OKAY, MRS. TALLEY...

...YOU'VE JUST HIRED YOURSELF ONE SLIGHTLY-USED PRIVATE EYE-- IF YOU STILL WANT ME! BUT THE NAME'S JASON!
OH, THANK YOU, MR.-- JASON!


I'LL NEED A LIST OF YOUR FORMER BOARDERS, MRS. TALLEY, AND THEIR CURRENT ADDRESSES!
THAT'LL BE NO PROBLEM, JASON...

...BUT INFORMALITY WORKS BOTH WAYS! PLEASE CALL ME SUSAN!
ANYTHING TO OBLIGE A CLIENT, SUE!
TAXI

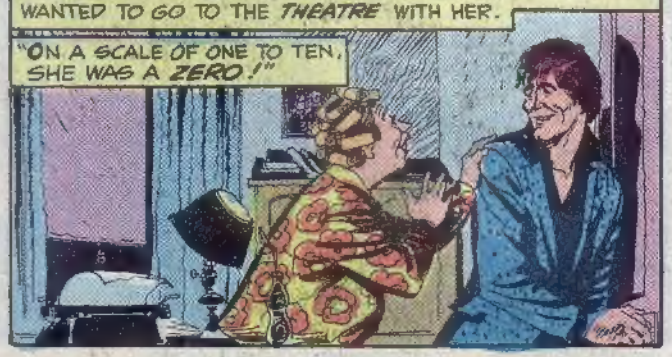
AND SECONDS LATER...
SO SHE'S HIRED A DETECTIVE, EH? THAT COULD BE OF IMMENSE HELP TO ME...

...AS LONG AS HE DOESN'T GET IN MY WAY!
SNAP
3

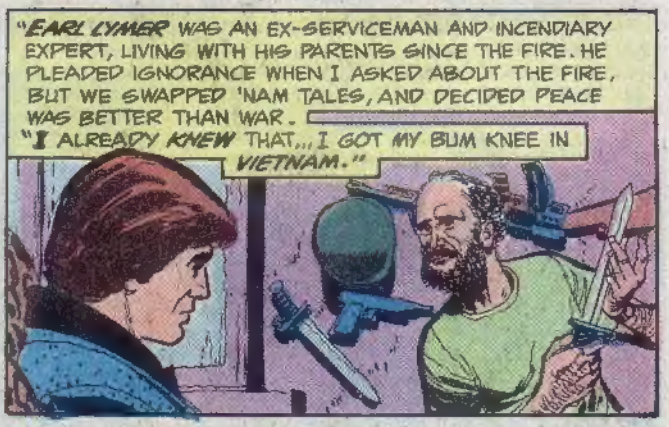
FROM THE NOTEBOOK OF JASON BARD:

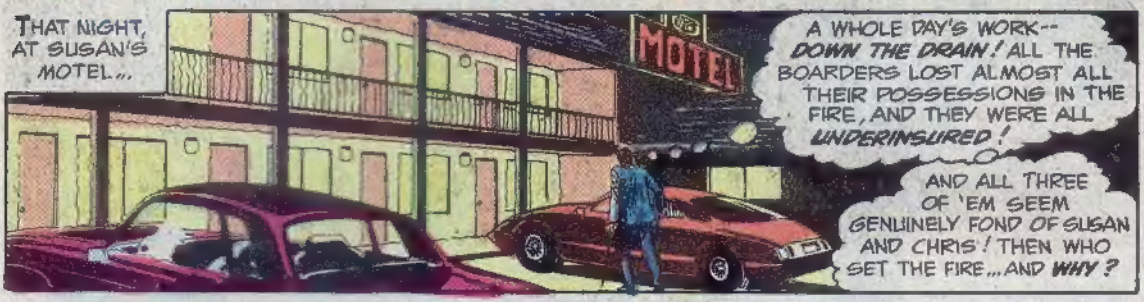
"NORMAN MELQUIST IS A MOUSEY LITTLE MAN, CURRENTLY LIVING IN THE BACK OF HIS USED BOOKSTORE. HE SAID HE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT THE FIRE, BUT WANTED TO KNOW IF PRIVATE EYE WORK WAS ANYTHING LIKE RAYMOND CHANDLER DESCRIBED!"

"IDA MOORE CURRENTLY RUNS HER TYPING SERVICE FROM A ROOM IN THE HOTEL MAYFLOWER. SHE DENIED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF THE FIRE, BUT WONDERED IF I WANTED TO GO TO THE THEATRE WITH HER.



"EARL LYMER WAS AN EX-SERVICEMAN AND INCENDIARY EXPERT, LIVING WITH HIS PARENTS SINCE THE FIRE. HE PLEADED IGNORANCE WHEN I ASKED ABOUT THE FIRE, BUT WE SWAPPED 'NAM TALES, AND DECIDED PEACE WAS BETTER THAN WAR.




THAT NIGHT, AT SUSAN'S MOTEL...
MOTEL
A WHOLE DAY'S WORK-- DOWN THE DRAIN! ALL THE BOARDERS LOST ALMOST ALL THEIR POSSESSIONS IN THE FIRE, AND THEY WERE ALL UNDERINSURED!
AND ALL THREE OF 'EM SEEM GENUINELY FOND OF SUSAN AND CHRIS! THEN WHO SET THE FIRE... AND WHY?

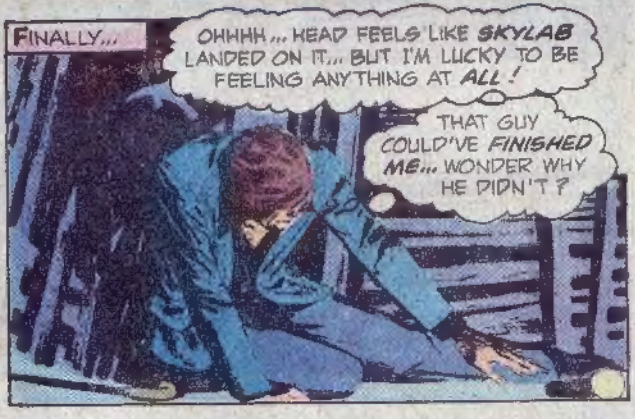
I-I'M SORRY, JASON-- IT'S JUST THAT SINCE DAVID AND I SPLIT IT'S BEEN SO HARD-- AND NOW THIS!
EASY, SUE-- DETECTIVE WORK IS LIKE ANYTHING ELSE-- IF YOU'RE STUMPED, YOU START OVER FROM THE BEGINNING...
...IN THIS CASE, THE SCENE OF THE CRIME!

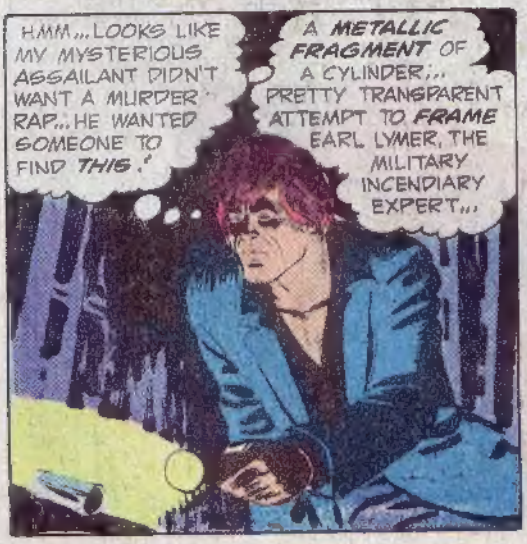
AND A SHORT DRIVE LATER...
ARSON'S A FUNNY THING... YOU WORK FOR YEARS TO BUILD A HOME, A PLACE THAT'S YOURS...
KEEP OUT UNSAFE!

...THEN SOME PSYCHO WITH A MATCH TAKES IT ALL AWAY, IN NO TIME FLAT...
HMMM...TIGHT SQUEEZE HERE!

NO IDEA WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR... THAT'S THE DEVIL OF THIS BUSINESS, SOMETIMES... YOU JUST POKE AROUND IN DARK CORNERS UNTIL SOMETHING...

...HITS YOU...!?


FINALLY...
OHHHH... HEAD FEELS LIKE SKYLAB LANDED ON IT... BUT I'M LUCKY TO BE FEELING ANYTHING AT ALL!
THAT GUY COULD'VE FINISHED ME... WONDER WHY HE DIDN'T?


HMM... LOOKS LIKE MY MYSTERIOUS ASSAILANT DIDN'T WANT A MURDER RAP... HE WANTED SOMEONE TO FIND THIS!
A METALLIC FRAGMENT OF A CYLINDER... PRETTY TRANSPARENT ATTEMPT TO FRAME EARL LYMER, THE MILITARY INCENDIARY EXPERT...

...AN ATTEMPT THAT STICKS LIKE A USED STAMP!
THESE FIBERS TELL ME WHO HIT ME--AND WHO'S BEHIND THIS WHOLE MESS!

AND SOON...
BUT WHY DO YOU WANT MY EX-HUSBAND, JASON--AND WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?
YOUR EX-HUSBAND HAPPENED TO ME, SUE--HE'S THE ONE WHO ATTACKED ME, AND BURNT YOUR HOUSE DOWN!
THESE FIBERS WERE CLINGING TO THE TOP OF AN ENTRANCEWAY! ONLY A VERY TALL PERSON WOULD BRUSH AGAINST THE TOP EDGE! YOUR EX-HUSBAND--THE ONLY ONE EVEN REMOTELY CONNECTED WITH YOU WHO'S TALL ENOUGH!
HE CLOBBERED ME, THEN PLANTED THE FAKE BOMB TO FRAME SOMEONE ELSE--SO HE COULD COLLECT ON THE INSURANCE YOU AND HE SHARE!
I-IT SEEMS CRAZY, JASON!
MAYBE--BUT I CAN PROVE IT!
AND ONE EXPLANATION LATER...
THAT'S DAVID'S TRAILER, JASON--BUT IT LOOKS EMPTY!
YOU WAIT HERE! I'LL SEE IF HE'S THERE, THEN CALL THE COPS!
TWO PEOPLE IN THERE! WHO--?
ALGREN!
YOUR PLAN WON'T WASH, TALLEY! THE COPS'LL KNOW IT'S NOT YOUR BODY IN THE FIRE!
EVEN IF THEY DON'T BUY IT, IT'LL GIVE ME A HEAD START!
NO TIME TO CALL FOR HELP...GOTTA TAKE HIM BY SURPRISE! BREAKING DOWN THE DOOR WOULD TAKE TIME... WARN HIM! HAVE TO TRY SOMETHING FANCY!
KARRASH
WHAT THE--?
6

C'MON, ALGREN! IF I SAVE YOUR HIDE, MAYBE THEY'LL REDUCE MY INSURANCE PREMIUMS!
OW--!
WHOOM
YOU CAN RUN, BARD, BUT IT WON'T DO NO GOOD!
OH, MY--
AND SOMETIME LATER...
TALLEY WAS A REAL LOSER, BARD! I ONLY WANTED TO QUESTION HIM AND HE TIED ME UP, RAVING ABOUT HOW WE WOULDN'T "GET" HIM!
SUE--? YOU HEAR THAT...? THAT LITTLE CONFESSION SHOULD GUARANTEE YOUR COLLECTING THE INSURANCE MONEY!
HE SAID HE SET THE FIRE-- NEEDED THE MONEY TO MAKE A NEW START IN A NEW TOWN!
I HEARD, JASON... IT'S JUST...
...DAVID WAS NEVER ANY GOOD BUT HE WAS MY HUSBAND! I LOVED HIM--ONCE! BUT NOW CHRIS AND I ARE ALL ALONE!
DON'T TALK THAT WAY, SUE...
...YOU'RE NEVER ALONE.
END
7

DIAL "H" FOR HERO -- THE NEW COMIC YOU CREATE! FIRST ISSUE ON SALE NOW!